

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 001491

SIPDIS

NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR J. FRAZER
LONDON FOR C. GURNEY
PARIS FOR C. NEARY
NAIROBI FOR T. PFLAUMER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/31/2013

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [ZI](#)

SUBJECT: MDC NOMINEES HARASSED, PREVENTED FROM FORWARDING
THEIR CANDIDACIES

REF: HARARE 1475

Classified By: Political Officer Audu Besmer for reasons 1.5 b/d

Summary:

11. (C) On July 21, about 20 cities across Zimbabwe opened nominations for candidates to stand in mayoral and urban council elections to be held on August 30-31, but at least 20 would-be opposition candidates were prevented from registering by ruling party youths. This occurred before the MDC received assurances from ZANU-PF that they would be allowed to campaign freely in exchange for Tsvangirai and MDC MPs' agreement not to boycott Mugabe's speech at the opening of parliament on July 22 (Ref). ZANU-PF officials have reportedly promised to re-open the affected nomination courts, and, if that happens and the MDC is allowed to campaign freely, this could dramatically change the tenor of these elections for the better, as compared to every other election in the past two years, which has been tainted by intimidation. End Summary.

12. (U) On July 21, nominations were held in about 20 cities across Zimbabwe for candidates to stand in mayoral and urban council elections to be held August 30-31.

Candidacies Prevented

13. (U) According to the independent Daily News at least 20 opposition candidates in Chegutu, Bindura, Marondera, Rusape and Karoi were forcefully prevented from registering their candidacies. According to the government-owned The Herald, ZANU-PF candidates subsequently won 44 council seats and one mayoral seat uncontested. The ruling party did, however, fail to field two council candidates in Bulawayo--those seats fell to the opposition MDC.

14. (C) In Chegutu, Amani Trust (a local human rights NGO) reported that ruling party youths beat 11 people in the vicinity of the nomination court. The Daily News reported that MDC council candidate Albert Ndlovu suffered severe neck injuries when he was attacked by ruling party youths who manned the gate at Chegutu Town House (where nominations were to take place.) The Daily News reported that in Chegutu, 10 ZANU-PF council candidates subsequently won their seats unopposed.

15. (U) The Daily News reported that In Karoi, two MDC candidates were taken to hospital for treatment of wounds inflicted by ruling party youths.

16. (U) In Bindura and Chegutu ZANU-PF youths set up makeshift roadblocks and prevented MDC candidate Fred Chimhiri from reaching the nomination court.

17. (C) Amani Trust also reported that ruling party youth militia members beat 4 people in Marondera near the nomination site on July 21.

18. (U) The MDC reported that they failed to field all their candidates in Rusape, Bindura, Karoi, Chegutu, and Marondera because of violence.

Campaign of Intimidation

19. (C) In the weeks leading up to the nominations, the MDC reported that ZANU-PF youths harassed and threatened one of their council candidates in Marondera, Deliquah Nicholas Simon Musiwa, and his family. According to the MDC, ZANU-PF youths abducted Musiwa's wife Sarudzai and their 18-yr old son Peter on June 5, held them overnight, and assaulted them at the ZANU-PF Mashonaland East Provincial Headquarters. On June 6 Musiwa was detained by police for 2 days and was reportedly assaulted by Criminal Investigations Department (CID) Inspector Manjengwa and four other police officers. Musiwa subsequently sought medical care at Masvingo General Hospital.

Some Cities Unaffected

110. (U) According to the Daily News, both parties fielded a full compliment of council candidates in Masvingo, Gweru and Redcliff. In Kwekwe, Redcliff, Gweru, and Mutare, both parties also fielded a full compliment of mayoral candidates.

Broken Promise?

111. (C) In a conversation with the Ambassador on July 22, MDC President Morgan Tsvangirai said that his party had received assurances from ZANU-PF that they would be allowed to campaign freely for the upcoming mayoral, urban council, and parliamentary by-elections. This was in exchange for Tsvangirai and MDC MPs' agreement not to boycott Mugabe's

SIPDIS

speech at the opening of parliament on July 22 (Ref). The agreement came too late for ZANU-PF to notify their officials in rural areas to stand down, and the intimidation campaign went ahead. Tsvangirai was subsequently told that the nomination courts would be re-opened in the affected areas. We have not been unable to confirm with either the GOZ or MDC officials that this might actually take place.

112. (U) In addition to mayoral and urban council elections, parliamentary by-elections will also be held for a Harare Central seat vacated by MDC MP Michael Auret who is stepping down due to illness, and a Makonde, Mashonaland West, seat vacated by the death of ZANU-PF MP and Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education, Swithun Mombeshora.

Comment:

113. (C) Perceptions are important in the early stages of any election. The ruling party has gained 44 out of 269 council seats already, and one mayoral seat - 16% of the total seats being contested. This is a significant headstart, and it appears the harassment campaign sent a strong signal early that MDC candidates will face an uphill battle against the usual intimidation tactics if they try to campaign openly. The council terms are for 5-years, so this is the first time the MDC has contested these seats. If the GOZ re-opens the affected nomination courts, and allows the MDC to campaign openly, they could dramatically change the tenor of these elections for the better as compared to every election in the past two years, which has been marred by intimidation. Whether ZANU-PF is willing to re-open the nomination process where it was blocked will be a significant test of ZANU-PF goodwill and readiness to pay more than lip-service to calls for national dialogue. End Comment.

SULLIVAN